DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 132 145 SP 010 677

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TITLE A Study of the Competencies for Cooperating Teachers as Perceived by Elementary Education, Physical Education, and Secondary Social Studies Student Teachers.
PUB DATE 10 Aug 75
NOTE 14p.; Research paper submitted for the Association of Teacher Educators 1975-76 Research Award

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Ability Identification; Basic Skills; *Cooperating Teachers; Educational Needs; Educational Research; Effective Teaching; *Faculty Evaluation; *Needs Assessment; Preservice Education; Skill Development; Student Opinion; *Student Teachers; Teacher Behavior

ABSTRACT

The perceptions of preservice student teachers as to the effectiveness of cooperating teachers' behaviors were used in this study to determine the competencies required in a cooperating teacher for each curricular group. During the terminal two weeks of student teaching, three groups of student teachers, one each in elementary education, physical education, and secondary social studies, were asked to identify effective cooperating teacher behaviors and to rate them on a need scale. Those behaviors rated "definitely needed" by a majority of the students were determined to be competency requirements for that group. All groups considered the cooperating teachers' "development of student teachers perception of the teaching-learning process" as the most important major category of behavior. Twenty-seven competencies divided into three large categories (perceptions of the teaching-learning process, understanding pupils, developing behaviors of a professional) were constructed from the student teacher responses. Agreement was noted at the level of major categories and subcategories, but a lack of agreement as to particular competencies emphasized the need for investigations in the various curricular areas to develop more curricular-specific competencies. (MB)

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ED132145

A STUDY OF THE COMPETENCIES FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS AS PERCEIVED BY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENT TEACHERS

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A research paper submitted to the Research Committee
in competition for the
1975-1976 Association of Teacher Educators Research Award
August 10, 1975

SP 010 677

College supervisors, cooperating teachers, school administrators, teacher educators, first year teachers, and student teachers all report that student teaching is the single most important thing in prospective teachers' professional preparation (Zulauf, 1959; Nagle, 1959; Miller, 1961). It is also generally agreed by all involved that the cooperating teacher exerts more influence on future teachers than any other single individual (Milner, 1959; Stratemeyer and Lindsey, 1965). However, greater specificity is needed to identify the role, function, responsibilities, and competencies of cooperating teachers in order for student teachers to receive the help they would like to have during this all important experience (Mercer, 1964; Smith, 1965; Nicklas, 1960; Bowers and Scofield, 1959; Lingren, 1959; Elkin, 1959; Hallman, 1965; Farbstein, 1965; Bradley, 1966; Deischer, 1971; and Spanjer, 1972).

Student teachers having different majors seem to have different interests, attitudes toward children and school work, and degrees of progressivism and extroversion (Jacobson, 1971; Creason, 1966; Pearson, 1955; Pfeiffer and Davis, 1965). Therefore, in an effort to determine if people having different majors do have different requirements of the cooperating teachers working with them, the writer has compared competencies of cooperating teachers supervising elementary education, physical education, and secondary social studies students doing student teaching in these specialties.

Using the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954), sixty-seven representatives of the three groups of student teachers identified things done by their cooperating teachers which the student teachers perceived to be very effective or very ineffective in helping them as

student teachers become competent teachers. The writer converted the incidents into behaviors. For organizational purposes and to facilitate the interpretation of the student teachers' perceptions, judges classified the three hundred eighty behaviors into the three categories and twenty-seven subcategories that are shown in Table 1. The behaviors were then randomly assigned to a competency questionnaire.

During the terminal two weeks of student teaching, one hundred thirty-nine student teachers from the three curricular groups were asked to react to the competency questionnaire by rating each of the competency behaviors as not needed, least needed, slightly needed, moderately needed, or definitely needed for cooperating teachers supervising student teachers having the respondent's major. Those behaviors identified as "definitely needed" by a majority of the respondents from each curricular group became the competency requirements for cooperating teachers of that curricular group.

A composite of two hundred fifty-two competencies were identified as requirements for at least one of the three groups. Two hundred forty-one of these were specifically identified by the elementary education group, one hundred four by the physical education group, and one hundred eighteen by the secondary social studies group. Of the composite competency requirements, seventy-four were specified by all three groups, and one hundred thirteen were specified by only one of the groups.

As seen in Table 2, there were eighteen of the twenty-seven subcategories in which there were significant differences among the "definitely needed" responses of the three groups.

Subcategories were ranked according to the percentage of "definitely needed" responses attributed to the behaviors within each subcategory

TABLE 1

CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES OF CRITICAL BEHAVIORS FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS

Major Categories		Subcategories	
In assisting student teachers in their development as prospective teachers, cooperating teachers should . . .			
1.00.00	Develop student teachers' perceptions of the teaching-learning process.	1.01.00	Respond on a personal level to student teachers.
		1.02.00	Be a model for student teachers.
		1.03.00	Establish a cooperative working relationship.
		1.04.00	Understand pupil learning.
		1.05.00	Induct student teachers into the routine of the school.
		1.06.00	Provide opportunities for an array of experiences.
		1.07.00	Assign expectations to student teachers.
		1.08.00	Plan with student teachers.
		1.09.00	Help student teachers identify, acquire, and use instructional aids.
		1.10.00	Give freedom to student teachers.
		1.11.00	Advise student teachers of appropriate clothing.
		1.12.00	Establish student teachers' authority.
		1.13.00	Help student teachers assume the role of teachers.

(continued)

TABLE 1--Continued

Major Categories		Subcategories	
		1.14.00	Help student teachers evaluate pupils.
		1.15.00	Help student teachers acquire disciplinary control.
		1.16.00	Observe student teachers.
		1.17.00	Have conferences with student teachers.
2.00.00	Deepen student teachers' understanding of pupils.	2.01.00	Acquaint student teachers with parent conferences.
		2.02.00	Help student teachers learn pupils' names.
		2.03.00	Help student teachers understand the ramification of excusing pupils.
		2.04.00	Solicit pupils' help for student teachers.
		2.05.00	Provide student teachers with insights which create an awareness of the total pupil.
3.00.00	Help student teachers develop behaviors of a professional.	3.01.00	Encourage student teachers to attend meetings.
		3.02.00	Relate professional literature to student teachers.
		3.03.00	Help student teachers get started as professionals.
		3.04.00	Help student teachers develop skill in record keeping.
		3.05.00	Encourage student teachers to develop professional relationships.

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF "DEFINITELY NEEDED" RESPONSES TO EACH SUBCATEGORY

Subcategory	X^2	Subcategory	X^2
1.01.00	45.89*	1.15.00	21.13*
1.02.00	53.43*	1.16.00	1.99
1.03.00	47.31*	1.17.00	44.22*
1.04.00	14.32*	2.01.00	9.03*
1.05.00	37.92*	2.02.00	.88
1.06.00	60.88*	2.03.00	1.26
1.07.00	23.54*	2.04.00	1.11
1.08.00	31.74*	2.05.00	19.43*
1.09.00	8.76*	3.01.00	.27
1.10.00	20.34*	3.02.00	.61
1.11.00	2.01	3.03.00	6.92*
1.12.00	11.64*	3.04.00	3.3
1.13.00	14.03*	3.05.00	19.52*
1.14.00	1.64		

*Significant at .05 level with 2 degrees of freedom.

by each of the groups. Significantly high correlations were found when the perceptions of the elementary education and secondary social studies, elementary education and physical education, and the physical education and the secondary social studies groups were compared. The rankings are found in Table 3, and the correlations between these rankings are found in Table 4.

A comparison was made of the similarities and differences in the subcategories each group rated with the five highest and the five lowest percentages of "definitely needed" responses. As seen in Table 5 and Table 6, a composite of sixteen subcategories were listed. Within the list all groups agreed on the placement of five subcategories. There

TABLE 3

STUDENT TEACHERS' RANKING OF "DEFINITELY NEEDED" SUBCATEGORY RATINGS FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS' COMPETENCIES

Subcategory	Elementary Education		Physical Education		Secondary Social Studies	
	Rank	Percentage of Responses	Rank	Percentage of Responses	Rank	Percentage of Responses
1.01.00	1	69.21	7	48.63	3	53.52
1.02.00	13	53.67	17	39.7	20	38.11
1.03.00	14	53.41	16	42.78	14	40.51
1.04.00	8	62.31	12	45.15	9	43.42
1.05.00	4	66.85	1	51.88	10	43.42
1.06.00	2	68.83	8	48.46	6	47.09
1.07.00	12	53.76	20	38.52	17	39.42
1.08.00	15	51.33	18	39.04	13	40.8
1.09.00	17	49.13	19	39.69	12	42.0
1.10.00	3	68.67	4	50.14	1	56.33
1.11.00	27	24.13	25	31.25	27	20.0
1.12.00	5	64.65	2	50.89	2	55.0
1.13.00	6	62.41	3	51.2	5	47.38
1.14.00	18	46.92	14.5	42.85	11	42.57
1.15.00	7	62.41	9	47.02	4	48.53
1.16.00	20	45.97	14.5	42.85	24	33.33
1.17.00	11	53.95	13	43.47	15	40.51
2.01.00	21	45.04	24	33.55	22	34.01
2.02.00	26	33.9	26	29.6	26	28.0
2.03.00	24	39.65	11	45.23	21	36.0
2.04.00	25	35.34	27	27.67	25	30.0
2.05.00	16	49.4	23	34.75	16	39.69
3.01.00	22	43.96	5	50.0	18	38.77
3.02.00	23	41.73	21	37.5	23	34.0
3.03.00	10	60.63	6	49.4	8	44.0
3.04.00	19	46.71	22	37.41	19	38.4
3.05.00	9	61.08	10	46.15	7	45.23

was no agreement on six subcategories found in the composite. One subcategory was uniquely placed on the list by the elementary education group, three by the physical education group, and two by the secondary social studies group.

TABLE 4

SPEARMAN'S RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS OF STUDENT TEACHERS' RATINGS OF "DEFINITELY NEEDED" COMPETENCY SUB-CATEGORIES FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS

	Elementary Education	Physical Education	Secondary Social Studies
Elementary Education	XXX	.75*	.91*
Physical Education		XXX	.73*
Secondary Social Studies			XXX

*Significant at the .05 level.

The findings seem to warrant the following conclusions:

1. All groups studied considered the cooperating teachers' "development of student teachers' perception of the teaching-learning process" the most important major category of behavior.

2. Student teachers having different majors perceived different requirements for cooperating teachers working with student teachers having their specific majors. This is illustrated by the fact that only twenty-four of three hundred eighty specific behaviors were determined to be "definitely needed" by a majority of respondents in all three of the groups studied.

3. Elementary education student teachers appeared to want more reinforcement than the other two groups studied in that they perceived more than twice as many competencies for cooperating teachers as being "definitely needed" than did either of the other two groups.

TABLE 5

COMPETENCY SUBCATEGORIES FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS PERCEIVED BY STUDENT TEACHERS TO BE THE FIVE MOST "DEFINITELY NEEDED"

Elementary Education	Physical Education	Secondary Social Studies		Competency Subcategories
XXX		XXX	1.01.00	Respond on a personal level to student teachers.
XXX	XXX		1.05.00	Induct student teachers into the routine of the school.
XXX			1.06.00	Provide opportunities for an array of experiences.
XXX	XXX	XXX	1.10.00	Give freedom to student teachers.
XXX	XXX	XXX	1.12.00	Establish student teachers' authority.
	XXX	XXX	1.13.00	Help student teachers assume the roles of teachers.
		XXX	1.15.00	Help student teachers acquire disciplinary control.
	XXX		3.01.00	Encourage student teachers to attend meetings.

4. The elementary education group was as much like the physical education group as it was like the secondary social studies group in that it had a perception of approximately twelve percent of the competency requirements in common with each of the two groups. The physical education group and the secondary social studies group appeared to be

TABLE 6

COMPETENCY SUBCATEGORIES FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS PERCEIVED BY STUDENT TEACHERS TO BE THE LEAST "DEFINITELY NEEDED"

Elementary Education	Physical Education	Secondary Social Studies		Competency Subcategories
XXX	XXX	XXX	1.11.00	Advise student teachers of appropriate clothing.
		XXX	1.16.00	Observe student teachers.
	XXX		2.01.00	Acquaint student teachers with parent conferences.
XXX	XXX	XXX	2.02.00	Help student teachers learn pupils' names.
XXX			2.03.00	Help student teachers understand the ramifications of excusing pupils.
XXX	XXX	XXX	2.04.00	Solicit pupils' help for student teachers.
	XXX		2.05.00	Provide student teachers with insights which create an awareness of the total pupil.
XXX		XXX	3.02.00	Relate professional literature to student teachers.

very different from each other in that their perceptions identified no competencies which they alone shared.

5. There were some competencies for cooperating teachers that seem to uniquely distinguish the needs of particular curricular groups of student teachers. The elementary education group solely selected forty percent of the total number of competencies identified as "definitely

needed"; the physical education group selected approximately one percent as did the secondary social studies group select approximately one percent.

5. The three groups disagreed more than they agreed on the specific behaviors within each subcategory, and yet when these specific behaviors were generalized into subcategories and ranked, the three groups were similar. This seemed to point out the need for investigations to be conducted into the specific needs of the various curricular areas in teacher education in order to get away from the generalized competencies so often talked about and, therefore, enable the unique needs of each group to be met by their cooperating teachers.

In light of the differences we find historically in societal expectations of males and females, it might also be enlightening for the various curricular areas to see if there are sex differences in the perceptions studied and, therefore, the needs to be met.

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